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SUBJECT: UNGA/C-5: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES DISCUSSIONS FOCUS  
ON ACABQ AND UNON

¶1. (U) Summary: Member States in the Fifth Committee have been engaging in informal consultations on agenda item 121: "pattern of conferences." The G77 and China, Japan, and USDel have all put forth language that would amend the draft resolution as presented by the Committee on Conferences (CoC) to the Fifth Committee. The G77 and China are primarily focused on the alleged "misuse" of UN premises by a Member State, audio recordings of Fifth Committee informal consultations, and conference servicing at the UN Offices at Nairobi (UNON) and the Economic Commission on Africa (ECA); the G77 is urging for more regular budget resources. Moreover, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) has requested for an increase in meeting times. Approval of the request will inevitably result in a program budget implication. These issues will come up during informal-informal consultations on Thursday, December 11, 2008 in the Fifth Committee. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ): During this session, the Chairman of the ACABQ, American Susan McLurg has submitted a letter requesting for an additional four weeks of meeting time for the Advisory Committee. Ms. McLurg argued that these four weeks were necessary since next year is a budget year and the ACABQ will also be receiving the budgets for the UN Funds and Programs.

¶3. (U) The G77 and China put forth language that would increase the ACABQ meetings from 38 weeks to 42 weeks. Mr. Vladimir Belov of the Program Planning and Budget Division answered Member States' questions regarding this request. Mr. Belov estimates that the G77's request would cost approximately \$500,000 for 2009. He also noted that the language as it currently reads would permanently increase the amount of meetings for the ACABQ, meaning that there would be additional costs during subsequent bienniums.

¶4. (U) UNON and ECA: The G77 and China have proposed paragraphs addressing posts and conference servicing for the UNON and the ECA. Botswana, on behalf of the G77 and China, inquired about the extensive use of extrabudgetary language posts at Nairobi when other UN offices in Geneva, Vienna, and New York primarily pay their staff out of the regular budget. Botswana would like to see the extrabudgetary posts in Nairobi funded under the regular budget. However, USDel notes that language staffers in Nairobi not only service the UN office, but also UN-Habitat and UNEP.

¶5. (SBU) Use of UN premises: Cuba, Venezuela, and Iran all expressed concerns about the "inappropriate use of UN premises by one Member State." These Member States claim that an NGO held two panel discussions where discussions led to the "maligning another Member State." For the Committee's reference, the Secretariat provided the administrative instruction for the use of UN premises for meetings, conferences, special events and exhibits (ST/AI/416).

¶6. (SBU) During USUN internal discussions, USUN Public Affairs confirmed that the not-for-profit United Against a Nuclear Iran (UANI) held two panel discussions on UN

premises, with the most recent entitled "Nonproliferation Panel Discussion." The content of the event surrounds a timely topic on the First Committee agenda. Considering the opportunity to heighten awareness of nonproliferation, the U.S. Mission supported this exceptional case. The U.S. Mission, in line with its policy, merely seconded the room reservations for the new organization. Seconding the request of an NGO to host the event, as has been past practice, was sufficient in fulfilling the Secretariat's room/panel discussion sponsorship requirements. It should be emphasized that the U.S. Mission was not a sponsor of the events. Moreover, UANI did the advertising through their own internal lists. There was no advertisement in the UN Journal.

17. (SBU) The U.S. Mission and UANI are in compliance with the Secretariat's policy as outlined in ST/AI/416. This was confirmed by the Secretariat and U/SYG Shaaban and reiterated by Ms. Vivian Lewis from the Department of General Assembly Conference Management. USDel will uphold this position during negotiations.

18. (U) Audio recordings: The G77 and China proposed language requesting the Secretariat to record audio tapes of informal consultations. The G77 claims that these paragraphs stem from the contradictory oral answers provided by the Secretariat during informal consultations regarding the construction of UNON premises. The G77 hopes that these recordings would spur the Secretariat to be more accurate and consistent with their statements. USDel, however, defended the no-recording policy in informals, arguing that such recordings would inhibit the Secretariat and cause others to treat informal consultations like formal consultations. The Secretariat also stated that unlike other committees, the

Fifth Committee primarily conducts its work in informal consultations. Producing and maintaining tapes of all informal discussions could also be costly.  
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